

# Jón Bjarnason Academy

Year Book  
1934-1935





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Jón Bjarnason Academy

Year Book

1934-1935



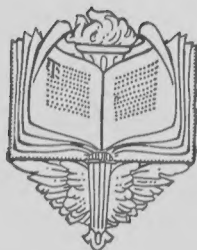


*Rev. Jón Bjarnason, D.D.*

*Father of the Icelandic Lutheran Synod of America and  
founder of Jón Bjarnason Academy.*

# Jón Bjarnason Academy

*Founded in 1913  
by the Icelandic  
Lutheran Synod  
:: of America ::*



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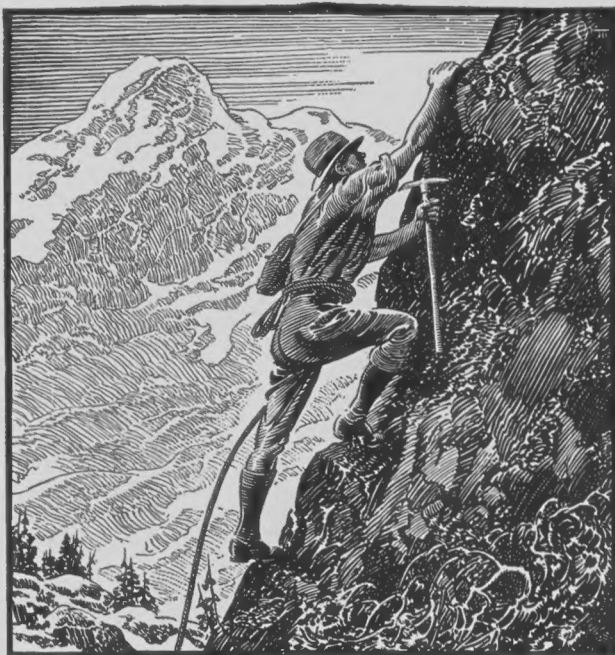
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# "Christian Education and Modern Life"

*An Address Delivered at the Graduation Exercises of  
Jón Bjarnason Academy on June 3, 1935*

*By REV. B. THEODORE SIGURDSSON*

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Graduating Class, Ladies and Gentlemen:

In opening this short address, I wish to assure you, that as a graduate of the Jón Bjarnason Academy and as a member of the Board of Directors, I feel greatly honored to be privileged to speak here on this auspicious occasion. I feel, too, a sense of trepidation, for I realize the high hopes and the problems which confront young men and women who have reached this crucial point in their lives, especially in this age of economic, politic, and spiritual chaos. The rising generation today is faced with problems such as no generation ever faced before. In generations past the average student coming out of high school or college was practically assured of a position or trade which would prove lucrative. Today that assurance is a thing of the past—and what is even more tragic, is the fact, that the type of instruction given in so many of our state or secular schools, sends out graduates completely at sea, with regard to the great spiritual values of life, which are in my estimation on an equal if not higher plane than scientific knowledge. Scientific learning divorced from religious and moral instruction and training makes for an unbalanced and disintegrated personality.

You, who are now graduating from the Jón Bjarnason Academy have, I am sure, without exception, been the recipients not only of fine instruction in the scholastic field, but also of a fine Christian influence—spoken and unspoken—an influence which emanates from every word and action of consecrated instructors who have shown themselves in word and deed, true Christians—true builders of the nations finest citizens. This evening I shall not try to give you any patent solution for all your problems,—not endeavor to prescribe a panacea for all the things which we feel to be wrong in the world today. I am still too close to my graduation days to be able to speak to you as a sage or seer with years of experience behind me. Suffice it to say that I am fully aware of the problems, hopes and perplexities we are all facing— young and old. I would that I could give you the touchstone of happiness and success. But in our present day, that is not even possible for the world's great, to say nothing of a humble, youthful clergyman starting out on a career. But of one thing

I am convinced—and that is, that one of the finest things any young person can have, as a foundation in preparing for life work in any sphere, is education received in a Christian institution. I should therefore like to speak to you of “Christian Education and Modern Life”—

Christian education is the most desperate need of the world today! The Chicago American recently presented a very illuminating symposium on crime, its cause and cure. A Judge, a police official, an indictment expert, a doctor and a student of criminology were the authors of the report. They all agreed on one great fact,—“the underlying cause of crime and general disrespect for laws and conventions, is the absense of religious training of the youth,—and conversely the most potent force for the cure of these ills, is a return to the teaching of religious principles.” The late Thomas R. Marshall made this complaint,—“The trouble with our modern education is that it has too much materialistic science and not enough God hunting.”

According to statistics given out by the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism, that organization has a stupendous work afoot to undermine the spiritual life of this rising generation. In a new catechism they have published and which bears the title “The Church of Humanity”, they flatly declare there is no God, no soul, and no life hereafter. They claim to have organizations in more than 20 colleges and universities in the United States and Canada. The spirit of revolt in modern youth, which has so alarmed many good Christian parents, makes the work of such an organization much easier. They have organized “A Junior Atheist League” for those ranging in age from 10 to 17—and have groups with these unusual names:—“God’s Black Sheep”, “The Damned Souls”, “The Legion of the Damned”, and “The Hedonistic Host of Hell Bent Heathens.”

The “Anti-Bible Society”, organized in New York City, aims to discredit the Bible and to destroy Gideon Bibles in hotels. In the year 1928 this organization spent \$83,000.00 in tracts and literature of an anti-Bible nature. The political chaos of the world has also been a help to those endeavoring to break down religion. In both the United States and Canada the more radical Communist organizations, following the lead of Russia, stress the denial of God as a necessary premise for the realization of true Marxism.

Atheism is taught in many of our schools and no longer shocks. Ingersoll in days gone by shocked the world with his ridicule of the Bible, but today blasphemies no less terrible couched in the language of science and philosophy are heard by practically all young people in our universities and the shock does not register. Subjects such as psychology, biology, anthropology, and zoology are taught in an absolutely atheistic manner in the great majority of cases. In many cases, however,

much of the belief in the divine is eliminated by silence, in a study of history, and mention of spiritual guidance is studiously avoided. In the teaching of comparative religion, revelation is not mentioned, and in the study of biology and astronomy the omnipotent creator and designer is passed over in silence. This, naturally, must leave in the mind of the student, no doubt as to the attitude of the professor.

I am moved to ask: What is a world without a God? Atheism leads to fatalism, pessimism and finally despair. Ideas, ideals, purposes and beliefs,—all that is mental ceases then to have any meaning in the scheme of things. In atheistic philosophy, in nature as well as in human history, warfare and destruction have been the means of advance. The laws of nature are immutable and this process must therefore continue. The best course then is to imitate nature—to triumph through violence. Ethics are non-existent in an atheistic philosophy. Man becomes a part of nature, subject only to its inexorable laws, and there is no God for him to look up to or to care for him.

I should like to illustrate to you the despair which accompanied the loss of faith in an outstanding educator, Professor Romanes. He says:—"I am not ashamed to admit that with my virtual denial of God the universe has lost for me its soul of loveliness, and although from now on the precept—"work while it is yet day,"—will doubtless gain an intensified force from the terribly intensified words—"the night cometh when no man can work". Yet when at times I think, as think I must, of the appalling contrast between the hallowed creed which once was mine, and the lonely mystery of existence as now I find it,—at such times I shall not find it possible to avoid the strongest pang of which my nature is capable. For whether it is because my intelligence is not sufficiently advanced to meet the requirements of the age, or whether it is due to the memory of those sacred associations, which to me were the sweetest that life has given, I cannot help but feel that for me and others who think as I do, there is a dreadful truth in the words of Hamilton:—"Philosophy having become a meditation not only of death, but absolute annihilation, the precept "know thyself",—has become transformed into that terrible oracle of Oedipus—"Mayest thou never know the truth of what thou art"—

Think my friends—if this philosophy has obtained a hold or will in future gain a hold on our youth, what an orgy of despair, immorality and crime is bound to result. Is it any wonder that juveniles are now engaged in criminal activities to an extent which was never previously known in the history of man.

In his famous Christmas editorial some years back Henry Waterson said: "Surely the future looks black enough, yet it holds a hope—a single hope. One and one power alone can

save us. This is the Christian religion. Democracy is but a side issue. The paramount issue underlying democracy is the religion of Christ and Him crucified,—the bedrock of civilization.” In view of our heterogeneous citizenry, including all types and nationalities of men, ranking from Atheist to pious Christian, our state endowed schools do not teach any religion. It is therefore the business of the Christian Church to foster Christian education in the home and in the church school. The church is responsible for the task of establishing and maintaining Christian schools and colleges. Every Christian should be a devoted disciple of this cause.

Christian education is necessary to spread the eternal truth, to prepare efficient leaders in all walks of life. Wisdom, understanding and knowledge of God’s revealed truth is promulgated and preserved only through the medium of Christian education. *It is absolutely necessary* to preserve the moral and spiritual values which have so widely been eliminated by our Godless, modern, secular education.

We glory, all of us, in the triumphs of true science. But so much is taught today in many secular schools which is not science, for science is a systematic presentation of truths substantiated by facts, not merely hypothesis and learned theories. In the study of the earth men have lost sight of the beautiful vision of the sky. In their observation of the creature and his habits, they have lost sight of the Creator and his will. In their admiration of the trinity of matter, force and motion, they have too often sacrificed the worship of the Holy Trinity—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. As Paul so well puts it in Romans: “professing themselves to be wise, they became fools and changed the glory of the incorruptible God, into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.” What else can be expected?

In view of this appalling condition dare the Christian church be idle and indifferent, and permit the youth to be educated only in secular branches? Is it wisdom? No, it is not. It is the business of the church to transform life by wisdom, understanding and knowledge of the Most High God.

President Thompson of Ohio State University recognizes the need for Christian education when he writes: “It is to her own schools that the church must look for leaders and workers generally. In our days a youth may receive his degrees from any of the best universities and be as ignorant of the Bible and the great literature it contains, the moral and spiritual truth it represents, and the fundamental principles of religion; the facts and methods by which they are defended, their nature and value to society, as if he had been educated in a non-Christian country! Who is to supply this lack if not the church school? Is not the church with all its institutions set for this duty?” God favors Christian education! The Old and New Testaments

are full of advice and suggestions. Every Christian must see the vital necessity of Christian education and be interested in and support this great and vital work!

Throughout the ages the church has handed down the torch of learning! The early settlers of the United States had, when they came, a high regard for the Christian religion and "hard by the church" they built their schools. Eight of the first nine American universities were established by the church.

Our Christian schools have a recognized place in modern life. Several years ago President Hadley of Yale said: "I do not believe you are going to make the right kind of citizen by a Godless education and then adding religion afterwards. The idea is wrong! Education and religion must go hand in hand!" Dean Hawkes of Columbia University said: "It is the duty of the colleges to develop the whole man, social, intellectual, esthetic and religious. An education which does not accomplish this, fails, in so far as it falls short of the ideal."

There is a recognized place for the privately endowed and state universities. They advance the frontier of knowledge and conduct an "eternal search for scientific truth." We however deplore the advanced knowledge, and science, falsely so called, which is tearing down the bulwarks of our civilization, and endeavoring to undermine the foundations of our religion. In view of this, we cannot over estimate the value and function of higher schools, for the Christian education of modern youth. The Christian college of today educates men for business, the professions—men who love the high ideals of Jesus. It exalts learning and enthrones Jesus Christ. It believes that the words of Jesus and Paul are worthy of study as well as those of Socrates and Aristotle. It believes in Godliness as well as knowledge, in morality as well as learning, in character as well as culture. Education, without a recognition of God and the Gospel of Christ, is frequently more a liability than an asset to the individual and the nation.

George Washington sounded a great principle when he said: "Let us with caution indulge the supposition, that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education, on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principles."

Christian education is the solution of many of the problems which perplex humanity today. Educators, journalists, criminologists, jurists, politicians might study with profit the results of a thorough Christian education, and compare its merits with a purely secular education. The latter is impotent in spiritual and moral spheres. Education is no guarantee against crime and immorality. There are some thirty doctors now serving time in Leavenworth penitentiary, and of the 66

classes in their night school 43 are conducted by university graduates. Education alone does not keep a man out of prison.

Statistics from some years ago show that the United States spent \$3,500,000,000.00 in criminal apprehension and prosecution. That is far more than all gifts made for benevolent and religious purposes. I think it would have been economy, if half that amount had been expended for the extension of the Kingdom of God. We do not believe, however, in state-supported religious institutions. Christian education is dependent on the benevolent spirit of the members of the Christian church, and I am sure that the results more than justify the effort put forth or the money expended.

Who can estimate the wholesome influence and the benefit accruing from our schools—supported by true Christians? Not only the nation and the church, but also the home and the individual reap the harvest. Our Christian schools radiate the spirit of Christ,—the spirit of truth and righteousness, love and peace, brotherhood and service. They are the forerunners of civilization and progress.

I am for the Christian school with all my heart and all my soul. I want the Christian school to be both Christian and collegiate. I do not want either element diminished. The only excuse there is for the church school is the religious one,—to teach youth religiously. Not merely to tolerate a religious attitude. Not merely to place about students a code of conduct. I believe in the Christian school, in full collegiate measure, to lead our youth intellectually, with religious emphasis. Not to tether a single impulse to investigate. Not to pull down any curtain before the exploration of any truth. Not to close unanswered any question they may bring. But let it lead youth religiously. Let education and religion walk hand in hand.

If Christianity cannot live in the presence of the open mind, it cannot live at all. If Christianity cannot meet our youth in fearless leadership and guide them into every avenue of research where truth can be traced, then it cannot hold their interest or allegiance and should not aspire to do so. The progress of Christian faith in the world can never be found in any system of qualified learning that would compromise the idea of free inquiry.

Christianity has only led the world as far as it has, because it has had no fear of the truth. We must challenge our youth with the call of the open mind. Youth need not close one window to the truth in following Christ. Truth and God are never in collision. God is truth—and there is no trail of truth which, if honestly followed, can lead away from Him. If we have a God who is to be rescued and kept secure in His place by little folks such as we are, then we have lost a God to worship. Religion walks right along with



education. Together, both are secure. Separated, both are in trouble. I ask as a churchman—for the recognition of the essential place of religion in education.

Some time ago, I read the story of a Godly teacher, whose service in his community was cut short by death. By the glow of his Christian spirit and radiant personality he had so planted himself in the lives of those whom he taught, that 30 years after, his influence is still a flame of inspiration and helpfulness in the community where he lived and taught and died. He had gripped the whole lives of his pupils, and his spell will never die in that community. He was and is indeed a rich man. His fortune cannot be ill spent by any careless inheritor. There are those in our church, laymen and, what is more surprising, clergy as well, who prophesy and hope that this will be the last year of the Jón Bjarnason Academy. Who can say what the outcome will be? But tonight I wish to say that the little story I just related, applies, I feel, to the teachers of our school, especially the principal and his dean, who have given the best years of their lives for this institution and the principles of Christianity, which it represents. The school may or may not go—I cannot say—but come what may, you, members of the graduating class, and any former students who are here tonight, for you and for me it can never die! It will have a place enshrined in our hearts, and the influence of those who gave their all for a Christian cause, will abide with us forever!





BOYS AND GIRLS OF THE 1935 GRADUATING CLASS

# If I Were of Icelandic Blood

By Prof. CHESTER NATHAN GOULD, M.A., Ph. D.

(The University of Chicago)

If I were of Icelandic blood I should not only be proud of my race on account of the high percentage of persons of ability in it, but I should feel confidence in my own power to overcome the difficulties of life, remembering that my ancestors, not only in the thousand and more years they occupied Iceland, but in the preceding thousands of years on the Scandinavian mainland, had survived the violent assaults of stormy seas, the cold and snow, darkness and disease, a limited diet in times of plenty, hunger in times of want, remembering also that the relentless selection performed by nature permitted only the strong and courageous to propagate themselves, giving me a rich inheritance of strength, courage and will.

If I were of Icelandic blood I should cherish and cultivate these memories, not only as a comfort and a spring of courage and happiness in myself, but as a rich inspiration of culture in my emotional and intellectual life. In order to do this fully I should make myself acquainted with the well-spring of knowledge about Iceland, namely, Icelandic literature. I should not rely on translations, for they give only the body, not the spirit, but I should learn to read the Icelandic language. To read it accurately I should pay close attention to the grammar and make me a notebook in which I should record Icelandic idiomatic expressions, reviewing them from time to time and adding to my collection. I should read the sagas, first the *Íslendinga-sögur*, then the others. I should read the Eddic poems, and after I had acquired more facility I should read the scaldic poetry, if possible with the help of a teacher.

But I should not limit myself to the written word, I should turn to the spoken and grasp every opportunity to hear and speak Icelandic, for it is especially in the speech of those who handle a language well that the spirit and power of a language dwells; moreover it is a peculiarity of Icelandic that it is often spoken in its purest form by those who have lived farthest from towns and schools. Therefore I should seek the company of older men and women who have lived closest to nature and farthest from the artificial; I should copy down and treasure the proverbs they cite, the idioms they let fall and the verses they quote; *opt er gott, það er gamlir kveða*.

I should be proud of the Icelandic language, not only for its content, but for its form, remembering that it is today in many respects a more venerable form of Germanic speech than the language of the Gothic bible of the fourth century.

And if it were possible (I know that it would be hard, for all the forces of society are arrayed against it) I should retain my Icelandic name. If my father's name were Gísli and mine Páll or Hólmfriður I should wish to be called Páll Gíslason or Hólmfriður Gísladóttir, and then to enable me to get along better in this non-Icelandic world I should add a permanent family name that was as Icelandic as possible and still could be pronounced by the English organs of speech, never forgetting that Icelanders and kings are the only persons in the western world whose first names are their only real names.

I should stick to all these things because of valuing my own inner self.



# Adolescent Education---The Curriculum and the Teacher

*By Prof. D. S. WOODS, M.A., Ph. D.*  
(The University of Manitoba)

The region of secondary education may be defined roughly as that area of growth bounded on the one hand by the dependence of childhood and on the other by the self-reliance of adulthood. As distinguished from the habit-forming period of primary education, it is also one during which supervision, rather than compulsion, is required to guide the new intellectual and social interests of the maturing mind and emotions to worthy abiding interests and attitudes. Worthy abiding interests and attitudes in turn beget the finer finish of good craftsmanship. These are the fundamental objectives of adolescent education and of the secondary school no matter what legal boundaries may be set up for administrative purposes. The curriculum, physical provisions and teacher are but instruments to aid the home and community in achieving these aims.

Today, because almost the total adolescent population of urban centres and an increasing proportion in rural parts is in the secondary school, the problem of public education at that level has become the most serious confronting both community and teacher. Under any conditions adolescence is a period of ever-widening interests, intellectual, aesthetic, recreational, social and vocational. It is also a period of significant physical and physiological change accompanied by great emotional disturbance. Moving from a selective to a non-selective secondary school has extended the range of pupil interests and learning capacities. Furthermore, modern facilities for out-of-school education have greatly extended the range of adolescent ideas and activities. It is a new secondary school that calls. The bright practical minded individual, who would otherwise have a job, sits side by side with the studious minded and infects the school atmosphere with a new vigour. Mental and physical restlessness, the products of modern awareness, challenge the school for a wide programme and practical teaching. To cultivate worthy abiding interests and attitudes is the same objective as of old but the problem of arriving is different. Curriculum extension has been necessary but the problem of discovering individual interests and aptitudes and of adapting methods of instruction to the interests and outlook of the many aggressive young people of today has become still more difficult and important. To find a combination or series of combination programmes that will harmonize mental, physical and social interests with pupil aptitudes and provide the activity programme

necessary has been rather much and rather sudden for some of the old folks in school and community.

The subject matter of the curriculum is but a part of our cultural capital selected to pass on our heritage from the past and simultaneously for use in guiding growth. The problem of adapting subject matter of all types to the growth characteristics, in general, peculiar to adolescence, and more intricate still to the needs of the individual, in order that the desirable objectives already stated may be attained is the great challenge confronting the secondary school teacher. Neither the ill-equipped individual nor he who has ceased to grow can worthily meet that challenge. Let us examine the import of this more closely.

Intellectually, the secondary school functions not only to extend one's range of ideas but also to assist in organizing ideas. The process of intellectual growth is by reflective thinking. Possibly more than by any other characteristic of learning may the secondary school thus be distinguished from the primary; not that some power of reflective thinking is not gained at the primary level but rather, that it is not the dominant characteristic of learning, neither is it the dominant objective of instruction at that level of growth. Hence, the organization of and instruction in the different types of subject matter which lend themselves to training in reflective thinking must be adapted to that purpose. In addition the adolescent is interested in immediate goals or desirable accomplishments which may be observed by himself.

This may be illustrated by reference to learning a modern language. Wrightly or wrongly, in general, conditions in our school communities are such that learning a second language begins with adolescence or thereabouts. The objective may be to learn to speak, to read, to write French or to do all three, not necessarily simultaneously. Perhaps, better not all three simultaneously as the ability to speak French is a more immediate and alluring goal. Happily, we have reached the point where learning grammar and figuring out translation passages in order to meet college admission requirements is passing as a method. For the many there is no acquisition to personality through pursuing an objective which bears little relation to immediate interests. There is an immediate interest in learning to speak French. An acquisition to personality, a change which cannot be lost, is acquired with the ability to speak French. A new interest and improved attitude toward study is acquired. If speaking French be the goal when vocabulary, phonetics and grammar are but secondary, the working tools to be graded, drilled and applied as one acquires the power to speak but, they in themselves are working tools but not objectives. The adolescent will submit to drill and will apply self-drill on language tools with the larger goal and accomplishment in sight.

There is an ultimate reason for both the main and these minor activities. Acquiring the ability to think in French as one masters the art of speaking, reading or writing, without having to revert to the translation method represents mental power added, a proper attitude toward study formed, a new interest mastered, and personality strengthened.

Turn briefly to history and civics. During adolescence one is becoming aware of his relation to and responsibility in the home, the school and the community. It is a period when social interests and a sense of responsibility may be and should be acquired. The secondary school, be it private or public, must accept responsibility for shaping the social and civic attitudes of those who enter. The value of history and civics in the secondary school curriculum lies not in acquiring factual information but rather in utilizing such material in order that the individual may come to understand the forces underlying social progress and the meaning of worthy social institutions. The learning product is a new attitude towards one's fellows and a greater sense of responsibility for social and civic affairs. The learning comes by way of organizing facts and seeing them in their proper relations. The process of learning is reflective thinking. Facts may fade but social and civic attitudes remain the one real gain from good instruction and guided reading.

Across the ages man has sought happiness and peace of soul in the good, the beautiful and the true; in the simple recognition of worth as expressed in the plastic and pictorial arts, in music, in the great literatures and in religion. From contact with these cultural treasures of his past and present one feels the grandeur and in silent contemplation idealizes the unseen powers that ultimately shape moral standards and laws governing human relations. Learning comes through frequent contact with these models of human achievement which create tastes and attitudes in turn accompanied by an emotional coloring that reacts upon behavior and conduct. The parent of ancient Athens, recognizing the importance of such training during adolescence, accompanied his son to the temple, the theatre and among the art treasures that lined the streets so that the boy might have a rich experience of values, which could scarcely be acquired otherwise. Just taking leave of frontier conditions, we in Western Canada have not understood the significance for adolescent education of much which for us lies waiting within the field of the appreciation studies. Apart from religion and to some extent music, we have scarcely gone beyond impressions, nor can we until the understanding of its educational worth in shaping ideals and the power to pass along the message have in a much larger measure become the possession of the secondary school instructor. The process of learning is by contact and casual instruction, the learning product a new and acquired sense of values. The reaction may

be observed in one's attitude toward dignity of form, manners, beauty and truth. The acquisition of these qualities of character lie within the range of adolescent interests and emotions and challenge the secondary school.

What of the practical arts? They typify the world of manual labour and may be utilized to give an understanding and to dignify those activities common to the broadest of all fields of human endeavor. The learning process is by way of the manipulation of materials, the product an attitude toward perfect workmanship. Under wise instruction the point may readily be reached where individuals will go beyond the instructor and seek guidance from books. Any subject in the field of the practical arts lends itself to the training of the hand and eye and also to seeking information from the printed page. Manipulation of materials and reflective thinking combine to shape and mould new attitudes toward work and give that sense of joy which accompanies good craftsmanship. Because the goal is immediate, adolescent interest in such activities is easily aroused and for the more practical minded and less intellectually brilliant, though not necessarily all such, may shape abiding interests and attitudes.

This discussion represents an effort to show that worthy abiding interests and attitudes are the objectives of adolescent training. It undertakes briefly to indicate how the subject matter of the curriculum may be made a means toward that goal through finding or awakening interests and discovering individual aptitudes, and through adapting subject matter of all sorts to the purpose for which it is best suited. Space does not permit discussion as to how attention may be concentrated upon any secondary school activity up to the point where absorption in turn leads the individual on and on to the joys associated with perfect workmanship and teaches him that the joy of real achievement is the product of intensive effort.

The adolescent challenges the teacher to discover and to guide him. The curriculum is rich in materials but the selection and the methods of their adaptation to adolescent needs rest with the teacher.





# Golden Jubilee of the Icelandic Lutheran Synod

*By REV. R. MARTEINSSON, B.A., B.D.  
Principal of Jón Bjarnason Academy*

Sixty-five years ago the first Icelandic immigrants arrived in the United States and three years later (1873) the first of those people reached Canada. Immigration from Iceland continued until about 1910. Icelanders and their descendants are now located in various parts of Manitoba and Saskatchewan with smaller numbers in Alberta and British Columbia. They are also found in Minnesota, North Dakota and Washington in the United States. They are really scattered all over the continent. Possibly some 30,000 people of Icelandic origin and descent are found on the North American continent.

Very early in the history of at least their largest settlements these people began to take what steps they could to preserve their Christian faith for themselves and for their children. They had all belonged to the Lutheran State Church of Iceland. To at least many of them, the Lutheran type of Christianity was a precious heritage and was not to be discarded in this new land.

The first Icelandic service on this continent was conducted by Rev. Jón Bjarnason in Milwaukee, Wis., on the 2nd day of August, 1874. The first Lutheran congregation among Icelanders was organized by Rev. Páll Thorlaksson in Shawano County, Wisconsin in 1875. Icelanders settled on the western shores of Lake Winnipeg in 1875. Not very long thereafter the settlers began to organize themselves into congregations, and for a time they were served by two Icelandic Lutheran pastors, both mentioned above. An exodus from that settlement to North Dakota occurred in 1879, and there similar church work was commenced.

In 1885 there were two Icelandic Lutheran pastors in North America. Rev. Jón Bjarnason in Winnipeg and Rev. H. B. Thorgrimsen in North Dakota. In January, 1885, the latter extended invitations to Icelandic Lutheran congregations to come to a meeting at Mountain, N. D., to form a synod. The meeting was held in January, devised a constitution and took what other steps were necessary to organize a synod. The first meeting of that synod was held in Winnipeg in June that year. Officers were then elected and organization completed. The first president was Rev. J. Bjarnason. He continued in office

for 23 years. A picture of this first annual convention of the synod with the names of the delegates appears in this issue.

The original membership of this synod was 12 congregations and one pastor, Rev. Thorgrimsen having left to serve Norwegian congregations. Nevertheless the synod went to work. Sunday schools were organized and preaching kept up as far as possible. After a while new men were added to the ministry, churches built, young people's societies organized and foreign missions aided. Very soon after its founding the synod launched an official organ "Sameiningin," which is now in its fiftieth year.

In 1913 it was decided to make a beginning of an educational institution with a three-fold object: giving general culture, providing instruction in Icelandic, and disseminating Christian influence. This had been the dream of many people in the synod for some time. It had been first suggested by the Rev. Jón Bjarnason who was during his time the prime mover in all the major activities of the synod. The little institution is still functioning as Jón Bjarnason Academy.

In 1915 an old folks' home was established, now located in a fine home of its own at Gimli, Man. It has always been successful and popular.

A member of the synod, Rev. S. O. Thorlaksson, is a missionary in Japan, in the service of the United Lutheran Church in America. The synod makes a yearly contribution to the foreign mission work of that church body.

The greatest work done by the synod has been its home missions. To bring the word of God as far as possible to all our scattered and scattering people has been a difficult problem and a constant effort. Lutheran congregations are now found wherever Icelanders are settled in any large group.

For a number of years all our church work was done in Icelandic. Then the needs of the younger generation called for work in English, and is now claiming more and more of our activities. In some cases the Sunday schools and the young people's societies are now conducted entirely in English, and all our pastors do more or less English preaching. The Icelandic language, however, still claims the loyal devotion of many of our people.

The present membership of our synod is 8,254 souls; value of church property is \$231,500; number of congregations, 53; number of pastors (including the foreign missionary), 14. The present officers of the synod are: president, Rev. K. K. Ólafsson, of Seattle, Wash.; secretary, Rev. Jóhann Bjarnason, of Gimli, Man.; and treasurer, Mr. S. O. Bjerring, Winnipeg.

The Jubilee Synod is meeting at two places: at Mountain, N. D., June 19th to 21st; and in the First Lutheran Church,

Winnipeg, June 21st to 25th. Two memorial booklets will be published: one in Icelandic, by Dr. Richard Beck, Professor in the University of North Dakota, the other in English by President K. K. Ólafsson. Some of the special features of the convention will be a public meeting at Mountain, a young peoples' rally at the same place, and in Winnipeg a lecture by Rev. Dr. B. B. Jónsson, pastor of First Lutheran Church, greetings from high officials of church and state, festival services, a concert under the direction of Alderman Paul Bardal, a public meeting sponsored by the Women's League of the Synod.

The half century mark has been reached. The chief elements in our celebration are gratitude to God for blessings in the past and the prayer and hope that He may guide our footsteps aright in the future.





*FIRST ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE ICELANDIC LUTHERAN SYNOD OF AMERICA*

*Fr. J. Bergmann, E. H. Bergmann, Jónas Hall, Björn Jónsson, P. S. Barial, Björn Pétursson, Jónas Stefánsson, Benedikt Pétursson, S. G. Stefánsson, B. L. Baldurínson, M. Paulson, Fr. Friðriksson, sjera Jón Bjarnason, Árni Friðriksson, Gísli Jónsson, Þorlákur G. Jónsson, Sigurður Jónsson, Kristján Kjærnestad, Friðrik Jónsson, W. Anderson, Jón Ólafsson, Þorsteinn Jóhannesson, Ólafur Guðmundsson.*

# The First Seven Years of the Icelandic Settlement in North America

*A Lecture Delivered in Winnipeg in 1914 by*

*J. T. Thorson, K.C., ex-M.P.*

Today I wish to speak to you of one group of foreign born pioneers, viz: the Icelanders, not because their lot was any harder than that of others, for their story is only a chapter of the history of the pioneers of the west. I speak of them, particularly, because I happen to know something of them and because their main settlements in the early days were in the Province of Manitoba and the State of North Dakota. Then, too, they have been in North America a little over half a century. May I add, also, that North America was discovered by Icelanders over four centuries before its discovery by Christopher Columbus. Leifur Eiriksson, son of Eirikur the Red, came to America early in the 11th century from an Icelandic settlement on the west coast of Greenland. So I ask you to bear with me, while I attempt to tell you the story of the first seven years of the Icelandic settlements in North America. It will be a simple tale, not lending itself to flights of oratory, if I were capable of them, but a plain statement of labor and hardship and persevering courage.

Men began first to think and talk of migrating from Iceland about the year 1870. The outlook for the future was dark, trade conditions were bad and there was much social and political unrest, for Iceland was then engaged in its political struggle with Denmark for freedom of trade and self-government. This was a period of great migration from Northern Europe to North America, especially to the United States. News of this had spread to Iceland and stirred the men's hearts with the desire to seek their fortunes in the new land.

In 1871 a few men left Iceland for America and settled on Washington Island near Milwaukee in the State of Wisconsin. The next year 18 persons, as far as I can ascertain, arrived and settled in Milwaukee and its neighborhood. They were well pleased with their surroundings, employment in factories was easy to get, wages were good and they had plenty to eat. Their only complaint was of the excessive heat. Their letters to Iceland are hopeful and even enthusiastic. They point out that in this new place they can save more in a month than they could in a year in Iceland. Their letters especially men-

tion the success of the Norwegians, who received them as brothers, and they express the hope that they, too, may succeed as the Norwegians have done, and establish a new Iceland in America with schools and churches and newspapers of their own.

The year 1873 saw the beginning of the real migration. In that year about 165 persons left Iceland for America and arrived in Quebec August 25th. Arrangements had been made by their compatriots in Milwaukee to place the new arrivals with farmers in Wisconsin so that they might learn something of agriculture, but the Allan S.S. Company in Glasgow had given them tickets to Northern Ontario, free passage from Quebec being provided by the Ontario government. So that only 50 of this party went on to Milwaukee. The remaining 110 were sent to Rosseau, a small village on Lake Muskoka in Northern Ontario. This was the first settlement of Icelanders in Canada. Free land was set aside for them, but only a few were able to take up homesteads. These began at once to build log cabins on their lands. Most of the others were engaged on road construction, but work was intermittent during the winter and wages were low, \$16 per month. Food was dear and not too plentiful and the cold was severe. During the winter many left the settlement for Milwaukee, but there, too, conditions had changed. The bank failures of 1873 had caused a financial panic throughout the country and unemployment was rife. That winter, however, passed without serious mishap.

The next year, 1874, saw a greater influx. Some 360 people came from Iceland direct to Quebec and all of these went to Ontario but not to the settlement of the previous year which had rapidly dwindled. Most of them went to Kinmount, a small village, about 100 miles north-east of Toronto, beyond the end of the railway. At Kinmount the men were engaged on railway construction at 90 cents a day. The government built for them and their families six small log huts, the two largest being 70 feet long and 20 feet wide and the remaining four, each half that size. In this crowded accommodation these people lived that winter. Work was not regular; food was dear and in spite of some government aid hunger was felt. Many children died that winter mainly from cold and lack of proper housing and food.

It was apparent that this district in Northern Ontario was not the promised land, the new Iceland of their dreams. The prospects of building up a settlement there was not a bright one. The land was all heavily wooded and difficult to clear and cultivate for people who had no implements, and no oxen or horses, and no money with which to buy them. With the completion of the railway there was no prospect of

employment. Opinions were divided; some wished to continue the struggle in Ontario, others spoke of Nova Scotia as the future home, thinking conditions would be better there. At any rate, they argued, they would be near the sea and nearer their dear Iceland and in the future they could build up trade relations with Iceland more easily from Nova Scotia than from Ontario. In the United States, too, the search for a suitable place to found the Icelandic colony was being continued. Many thought of Northern Wisconsin, others had gone further west to Iowa and Nebraska. A land prospecting party even went north along the Pacific Coast as far as Alaska, which had just been bought from Russia. The winter of 1874 was one of hardship and the spring of 1875 one of anxiety. The people in Iceland were warned not to migrate to America further until a suitable place was found.

In the spring of 1875 the Canadian Government suggested that the west shore of Lake Winnipeg in the new Province of Manitoba might be an ideal spot for these new settlers and offered to set aside for them a strip of land along the lake fifty miles long and twelve miles wide, open it all for homesteads and give them all a free passage to the new settlement. Three representatives were chosen to "spy out the promised land." On July 16th, 1875, these three, with three others who had joined them arrived in Winnipeg, the first Icelanders to set foot there. They went by boat down the Red River and landed near what is now Gimli. The land seekers were pleased with this place. Here was a lake, full of fish; here was good land not nearly so heavily wooded as the land in Ontario and the woods were interspersed with meadow land, thick with wild hay. This was decided upon as the ideal spot for the future home of Icelanders in the new world. The representatives brought the glad news back to Ontario and it was decided to move at once.

Late in the fall of 1875 the movement to the new home began. The Ontario settlements were totally abandoned. Log cabins and improvements and everything not absolutely necessary were left behind. The journey could not have been made had free passage not been provided, for most of the people were penniless. Altogether about 250 people came in a party from Ontario by way of Duluth, for as yet there was no railway to Winnipeg. At Duluth they were joined by a considerable party from Milwaukee. By rail the party proceeded to Fisher's Landing on the Red River and there they all embarked on board ship for Winnipeg on the journey to the promised land. I should like you to accompany in spirit these people on this journey, full of confidence and hope and trust in Providence. On this journey the name of the new settlement was decided upon, and it was to be "New Iceland" and through some irony

of fate the name of the main village was to be Gimli. Those who are familiar with the Norse mythology know perhaps from the Edda that after death there were three distinct places of abode: Hel—which received the unworthy and those who died of disease; Valhalla—where warriors who died on the field of battle found the rewards of their valor; and Gimli—the abode of the blessed, the most sacred of all, where the wise men and those chosen by the gods were welcomed to enjoy the blessings of paradise.

The party reached Winnipeg before the middle of October. It had been arranged that three men should proceed to the new district during the summer and put up hay for the cows which the government was to provide for the use of the settlers. This had not been done and the new arrivals were sorely disappointed for the prospect of spending the winter without fresh milk for the children was a serious one. Then, too, winter was not far distant. What was to be done? To remain in Winnipeg was impossible. Winnipeg in those days, was a city of only a few hundreds and conditions there were bad. This was the year of the grasshopper plague; not a blade of grass was to be seen and there were no crops of any kind. Starvation seemed certain if these people remained in Winnipeg. There was some hope of surviving the winter in the new land, for there was game in the woods and fish in the lake and some food was provided by way of government loan. All who could get employment were advised to remain in Winnipeg, but the remainder, about 200 in number, decided to venture out into the wilderness. Flat bottomed York boats, 16 feet wide and 32 feet long, were provided to convey these people and their belongings to their new home. On October 15th, the boats were loaded and the party embarked in them. They were pushed off into midstream and the journey down the Red River began. Picture the scene!—the end of October with its chilly nights and its promise of winter; the open boats with their cargoes of men, women and children drifting before the current; the grounding of the boats on the shallows and their navigation through the rapids; the Sunday service on the bank of the river; the hopes and fears of the settlers, knowing that no provision had been made for their reception. Eventually the boats reached the mouth of the river. There they were met by a Hudson's Bay Company steamer which towed them all to the spot which is now Gimli. The 60 mile trip from Winnipeg had taken a week.

Gimli was to be no paradise for them that first winter. The day after their arrival there was a heavy fall of snow, accompanied by severe frost. Here were these people in the wilderness with winter hard upon them, without any shelter except a few tents, and with only a small supply of food. Log



cabins had to be built at once and this was no easy task. There were no horses or oxen and logs had to be drawn by hand. Yet during that winter 30 log houses were built, including one which was used as a school house. It is perhaps worthy of note that English was taught there that first winter. That winter was one of terrible suffering. Food was dear and scarce, there were no roads and no means of getting food into the settlement; that year the fishing was poor and even had it been good, the men were not skilled in fishing through the ice; there was no milk for the children. Starvation faced the people and panic struck them. Many of them left before the winter was over. Of those who remained one-third died of scurvy and exposure. One household lost seven children out of nine. This was a terrible introduction into New Iceland, the abode of the blessed. Words cannot describe to you that winter of suffering, of cold and hunger and disease and death. It will never be forgotten by those who endured it. New hope came with the coming of spring, government aid was rushed in as soon as navigation opened; 20 cows were distributed amongst the settlers, sometimes three or four families shared one cow. Summer brought a revival of spirits, part of the land was cultivated and some crops were put in.

In the summer of 1876 about 1200 people came from Iceland and most of them joined the settlement on the western shores of Lake Winnipeg. They spread over all the area set apart for them and began to prepare for the winter. The story of hardship is not yet finished. The summer of 1876 was wet and there was little hay and crops were almost a failure. In the fall smallpox appeared having been brought in by one of the new arrivals. Little attention was paid to it at first for people did not know what it was and there were no doctors at hand. In consequence it spread through the whole settlement like wildfire and even into the Indian reserve to the north. Medical aid was rushed in and the whole settlement placed under quarantine until July of the following year. That winter over 100 persons died of smallpox, almost one out of every ten. The havoc among the Indians was even greater. In one small village of two hundred inhabitants every individual died of the disease and the authorities caused the whole village to be burned to ashes. That winter many died of scurvy and other diseases for food was again scarce. Yet even with the terrors of smallpox, this second winter was less terrible than the first.

The summer of 1877 was a good one and gave the settlers a ray of hope. As soon as the quarantine was lifted many left the settlement to seek work elsewhere. Those who remained busied themselves with work on their farms. Much of the bush had been cleared and a good deal of land had been broken. Cattle were multiplying and hay was plentiful.

That year saw the first flour ground from wheat grown in the district. Other crops were fairly good. The winter was mild and passed without hardship. A brighter day appeared to be dawning.

But the period of trial was not yet over. The summers of 1878 and 1889 were wet, the land was unfit for cultivation, crops of hay were small and many cattle starved during the winters. Many of the settlers began to despair of success in this new Iceland of theirs and an exodus from the settlement began. The Icelandic settlements in the Counties of Pembina and Cavalier in North Dakota date from the fall of 1878 and succeeding years saw their steady growth.

The year 1880 was a year of floods; in the spring the waters of Lake Winnipeg were unusually high and another wet summer lay ahead of the settlers. Late in the fall the lake overflowed its banks, flooded the log cabins near the shore so that they had to be abandoned, and carried some of the haystacks out into the lake. Severe frosts set in with the receding of the flood waters and that winter the cattle were fed on frozen hay. In 1881 the exodus from the district became general. That year saw the beginning of the prosperous settlement in the Argyle district in Manitoba and a large influx into North Dakota.

So passed the seven lean years of the Icelandic settlements in America from 1873 to 1880. They were years of hardship and suffering, of cold and hunger and disease and pestilence and death. But better years were to come.

My story is almost finished and I do not intend to tire you with further details of hardship. You are all more or less familiar with the struggles of the pioneers.

Although many left the New Iceland during the years 1878 to 1881, their places were taken by new arrivals. The immigration from Iceland continued until the close of the last century. Since then it has been intermittent. It is rather difficult to ascertain the total number of Icelanders who have come to this country, but I think I might perhaps be safe in saying that there are now in America between 30,000 and 40,000 people of Icelandic origin.

In all the letters which the early pioneers wrote home to Iceland there appeared one outstanding feature, and this same feature I have attempted to emphasize in my address to you, viz: the desire to establish a New Iceland in America, where all Icelanders could live in peace and happiness without severing the bonds which tied them to the old land. There was no intention then to take any part in the formation of a new country or the development of a new nationality. The new settlement was to be a part of Iceland and they were to

remain Icelanders still, holding to their language and customs and traditions. With this end in view, they organized their schools and churches and established their newspapers and periodicals. But the desired object has failed as it was bound to fail.

New Iceland could not hold all the newcomers; they desired greater opportunities and a wider field. The Icelandic settlements have spread westward in Canada and the United States to the Pacific Coast. In the main they have prospered; the lean years have been succeeded by fat ones. Their original policy of isolation has been abandoned and they have sought to take their full share in the rights and privileges of this new land. In agriculture and industry, in the trades and the professions they have won success. Nor do they forget to whom the opportunity for success is owing. They have endeavored to share the liabilities of citizenship as they have shared its rights. How fully they have done so, is not for me to say. May I mention, however, that in Canada over 1,000 volunteered for active service during the late war and about 125 never returned.

New Iceland is still known by that name to its Icelandic inhabitants and to the older people. The settlement has survived its early years of privation and suffering, and has grown and developed. It is still the largest Icelandic settlement and its people are reasonably prosperous and contented. Many Icelanders in America still cling to the past and their early dreams, but in the main the identity of the Icelanders in America as Icelanders is being lost. Whether that is altogether desirable is a question of controversy. But the fact nevertheless remains.

I have almost finished. I have tried to tell you the simple story of the Icelandic pioneers in America, to take you through the hour of travail in which the Canadian of Icelandic origin had his birth. Let me emphasize one fact in connection with these people. In the short space of half a century one-fifth of the entire population of Iceland has been transplanted and has taken root in Canada. They make no apologies for their presence in Canada for they are part of it. They have thrown in their lot with Canada and are taking their share in the building of our new nation. Why should we not reserve judgment as to our other foreign born people. Let us remember we regard them in a different light from that of 25 years ago.

So in approaching the problem of nation building out of the various elements in our midst, I suggest that you consider what has been accomplished by the foreign born peoples of this

country, their aims and aspirations, their struggles, and successes. Rome was not built in a day. What older immigrants have done, more recent arrivals may yet do. The problem of assimilation is not an easy one but we must solve it if we are to build a nation. In attempting a solution of that problem, I bespeak your sympathetic understanding of the newcomer, whether he be artisan, fisherman or peasant; whether he be Anglo-Saxon or Scandinavian, Teuton or Slav. Each may have his contribution to make. The newcomer of today is the raw material from which the Canadian of tomorrow will be made.



# Valedictory Address for Grade XII.

*Delivered at the Graduation Exercises of Jón Bjarnason Academy, June 3rd, 1935.*

*By BETTY McCaw*

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I deem it an honor to have been chosen to speak a few words to you—the parents, teachers, and friends of the students of the Jón Bjarnason Academy—on behalf of the Grade Twelve who are graduating today. I am their representative; I speak not with the voice of an individual but with the voice of a group; tonight I convey to you the valedictory message of my illustrious, dignified and learned friends, the members of this year's senior graduating class.

Graduation day is a memorable one for all of us. It is an occasion which we should remember throughout our lives for it is symbolical—symbolical of fulfillment, of progress, and of promise. We shall all achieve something today. You our parents and teachers have worked together untiringly to develop and mould us into useful citizens; you have striven incessantly to make us mentally, morally and physically fit for the duties of citizenship. Thanks to your efforts and to our own in a much lesser degree, we have taken a giant stride forward towards becoming men and women who will be a credit to any community in which we may live. Your task is nearing completion. We want you to be proud of your handiwork.

Graduation is a sign of unending progress, continual advancement. Progress means improvement, increasing proficiency, skill and competence. Thus, graduation which symbolizes the progress of each of us also symbolizes the progress of the nation itself.

Graduation marks the end of our school days. Of course our education will continue as long as we live—there's always more to learn— but now, we are young men and women who have the ability to cope with the problems of life—to vie with one another for its triumphs and to bear with one another through its tragedies. Yes, we have the necessary ability but we may hesitate to put it to the test. As yet, none of us has shouldered any heavy responsibilities or done anything noteworthy in any special line of endeavor. And because we haven't we are apt to doubt our capabilities. We may be afraid to take the first step just as little children shrink back when they are being taught to walk. They know that their chubby little legs



*Boys and Girls of the 1934 Graduating Class.*

were made to support them and carry them about but they have never tried them out before and doubt whether those same little legs know what is expected of them. But they gain confidence from the quiet encouragement of loving and loved voices; they hold their tiny hands before them—they step out valiantly. After that it takes them no time at all to discover that there is nothing to this business of walking. If they become too sure of themselves, or if they become careless, they stumble and fall. Some brave little fellows scramble to their feet again without a whimper; others, in tears, seek mother for consolation. But they never become discouraged; they keep on trying; and, in the end, they walk confidently and fearlessly. When we begin to make our own way in the world, we shall be like those tiny tots. We shall know moments of uncertainty, doubt, and fear, which will pass and be replaced by assurance, trust, and hope. We shall experience joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, success and failure. Those nearest and dearest to us will share our tears and triumphs. In times of stress, self-reliant men and women will depend upon their own intelligence and ability to see them through; but the majority of us will turn to friends and loved ones for helpful advice, ready sympathy, and quiet encouragement.

\* \* \*

We want you to understand that we realize fully the enormous debt of gratitude we owe you. You have made us what we are today; you have filled us with unselfish ambition; taught us to value friendship; to be trustworthy and loyal; to think for ourselves; and to make a clear-cut distinction between right and wrong. We want you to know that, when you put time and money into our education, you made a good investment—one that will pay handsome dividends. Your faith in us we intend to justify by living honorable, clean, and unselfish lives. Whatever we are called upon to do we will do wholeheartedly and to the very best of our ability. Thus will we show you our gratitude and prove to you our worth.

\* \* \*

Very soon now we shall be leaving the Jón Bjarnason Academy, never to re-enter it as students. Most of us have not attended the Academy for very long; but our association with the other pupils and the teachers of this school have been so pleasant, so friendly, that we contemplate leaving it with a feeling akin to dread. We have worked and played together for almost a year; and we have enjoyed each other's companionship. But, in less than a month, we shall be wishing one another "Good-bye and good luck!" without knowing when or where we shall meet again. Doubtless, at some time in the near future, many of us will find ourselves working side by side with some old friend, once more coming in close contact with a "side-kick" from "J. B." Work will be cheerfully neglected while

we talk over old times. As we look back into the past, happy memories, flooding into our minds, will bring a smile to our lips. When we turn again to the work that is awaiting our attention, it will be with new enthusiasm.

\* \* \*

It is with no little interest that we have watched the students of the lower grades advancing step by step towards the same goal that we seniors reached today; facing daily, the same problems that we faced; doing the same work that we did; and accomplishing as much as, or more than, we accomplished. Perhaps they have kept a critical eye on us, too. No doubt they have judged us according to the standards that they have set for themselves and either praised or condemned us. To them we have only this to say: "If our achievements have won your admiration, if our conduct, our actions, seem worthy of emulation,—then, when you take our places in Grade Twelve, show us that you can do as well; but if you think that we have not done our best, that we have not made the most of our opportunities, then show us that you can do better. That is a challenge. Do you accept it?"

\* \* \*

Now, for the few moments that remain, I should like to revert to my own personality and, instead of talking FOR Grade Twelve, talk TO them. And what I want to say to them has been said to young people thousands of times in the last half-decade and in any other period of industrial upheaval when the most brilliant minds in the world have pitted themselves against universal economic depression in a bitterly-contested struggle for supremacy. A little over a century ago, your forefathers began the settlement of the Canadian West. You all know with what hardships they were constantly forced to contend. With the same indomitable courage and resourcefulness with which they fought and finally subdued the revengeful fury of the Redskins, they unflinchingly faced famine, pestilence, and plague. Their fearlessness was superb; their faith, supreme. In the words of Browning, they

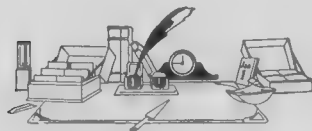
" . . . marched breast forward;  
Never doubted clouds would break;  
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would  
triumph;  
Held, we fall to rise, are baffled  
to fight better,  
Sleep to wake."

You are their children. Before you, today, you see a nation turbulent with unrest, filled with warring factions—a nation in desperate need—the nation that they created. Are you dismayed? Do you stand aghast at the thought of the odds against



you? Or is the dauntless spirit of your ancestors stirring slowly into wakefulness within you? May you be the worthy successors of those brave men and women. May you meet and conquer all obstacles as gallantly as they.

“Trust in thine own untried capacity.  
As thou wouldst trust in God Himself. Thy soul  
Is but an emanation from the whole.  
Thou dost not dream that forces lie in thee,  
Vast and unfathomed as the grandest sea.  
Thy silent mind o’er diamond caves may roll;  
Go seek them—but let pilot will control  
Those passions which thy favoring winds can be.  
No man shall place a limit in thy strength;  
Such triumphs as no mortal ever gained  
May yet be thine if thou wilt but believe  
In thy Creator and thyself. At length  
Some feet will tread all heights now unattained—  
Why not thine own? Press on;  
Achieve! achieve!”



## Valedictory Address for Grade XI.

*Delivered at the Graduation Exercises of Jón Bjarnason  
Academy, June 3rd, 1935.*

*By HUGH MACFARLANE*

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Faculty, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Some years ago, a celebrated Divine, in concluding an address full of inspiration and challenge, gave utterance to this arresting thought: “My sermon is over—but if it is of God—as I sincerely believe it to be—it is not ended. If you have received it in the spirit in which I prayed you might receive it—this sermon will have become part of you—and long after my words are forgotten—and my voice is stilled in death—this morning’s sermon will live on in your lives—reproducing itself again and again.”

Tonight as we stand on the threshold of life, we feel much as those listeners must have felt. Our studies, our association with the Academy—its ideals, its Faculty, may seem to be over—but truly we can say their influence, their action, is not ended. Difficult days lie ahead of us all, days that will test the sincerity of our purpose, days that will declare the value of our ideals and consciously or unconsciously we shall reproduce in those days—what we have assimilated in the past years and I believe that then, if not before, we shall discover that we have been given more than mere knowledge—more than instruction—that our teachers have given to us also of themselves.

To say thank you for all that they have done for and been to us, seems so pitifully inadequate, yet, we do say it in all its simple sincerity—by our words—and pray that power may be given to us for the days that lie ahead, that we may re-echo that gratitude in our lives.

Again a class passes into a world that is askew. In spite of man's planning and human effort, we are still groping in economic darkness, searching, it seems but vainly, for the gleam that will lead us to security and peace. Voices call "Lo—here is light" or "there is light" but most of them call to hearts too tired to follow the elusive glimmerings of that "will o' the wisp" prosperity.

What can untried, untested youth bring to such a chaos? We have no background of experience, no magic touch or sovereign remedy. Despite the will to work which one of us has any assurance of the chance, and yet I feel that we have our contribution to make, a contribution this world can ill do without. The contribution we can and must make is one of courage and of hope, courage to those who own to defeat, courage to strive again to take their place in the fight—and of hope for those who battle grimly against ever increasing odds.

Nor must we be unmindful of the danger voiced by the Apostle Paul who feared "that in saving others, he himself would become a castaway." Many and diverse disappointments will come our way, days of hope will be followed by weeks of discouragement, yet we must hold fast to our purpose, sustained by our ideals, strengthened by the knowledge that our task cannot be done by anyone else—that God—the world is counting on us.

So it is a solemn moment in our lives where we pause tonight, more than a milestone, it is a boundary post, marking our departure from the realm of theory to that of the experimental, the practical.

May we all, conscious as we are of our weaknesses strive to live nobly, achieve greatly, that those who have given of themselves so unsparingly to the task of our preparation, may see the travail of their souls and be satisfied.

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If you get into a tight place and everything goes against you, till it seems as though you could not hold on a minute longer, never give up then, for that is just the place and time that the tide will turn.—*Harriet Beecher Stowe.*

It is well for a man to respect his own vocation whatever it is, and to think himself bound to uphold it, and to claim for it the respect it deserves.—*Charles Dickens.*

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The loss of these tastes is a loss of happiness, and may possibly be injurious to the intellect, and more probably to the moral character, by enfeebling the emotional part of our nature.—*Darwin.*

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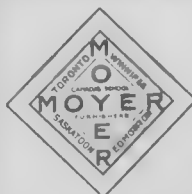
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Courage and perseverance have a magical talisman, before which difficulties disappear and obstacles vanish into air.—*John Quincy Adams.*

The world is a looking-glass, and gives back to every man the reflection of his own face. Frown at it, and it in turn will look sourly upon you; laugh at it and with it, and it is a jolly, kind companion. —*William Makepeace Thackeray.*

I never make the mistake of arguing with people for whose opinion I have no respect.—*Gibbon.*

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